Missouri Seeks Legal Action Against Bridgeton Landfill Owners

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Last month, the state said there was no risk to people living around that stinky landfill in Bridgeton.

Now, a halfway change of heart.

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources sent a letter to the attorney general's agricultural and environment division Thursday, requesting the state "institute appropriate legal action to resolve any past, present, or future environmental violations" at the Bridgeton Sanitary Landfill owned by Phoenix-based Republic Services Inc .

Earlier this week, DNR conducted an air quality test near the landfill for the period of Feb-13-March 15, 2013. The Department of Health and Senior Services said during three days of the testing period (Feb. 14, 23, 24) air samples showed concentrations of hydrogen sulfide warranting further review. According to DNR's website exposure to hydrogen sulfide can cause headache, irritation to eyes, nose or throat, and may cause difficulty breathing especially for persons with asthma or other chronic respiratory conditions. Symptoms generally associated with offensive odors typically disappear once the odors dissipate.

DNR has selected an expert air sampling contractor that will meet with the department later today.

The landfill has had underground fires for the last two years. Landfill owner Republic Inc. says recent drilling to try and get the fires under control may have actually made the smell worse, temporarily.

The Bridgeton trash landfill is just feet away from the West Lake Landfill, where nuclear waste was dumped decades ago.